

Proclamation 7440—National Safe Boating Week, 2001

May 17, 2001

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Over 70 million recreational boaters enjoy our Nation's waters, and the national economic impact of recreational boating is more than \$25 billion each year. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the enactment of the Federal Boat Safety Act. This legislation, designed to improve boating safety and to foster greater use and enjoyment of our rivers, lakes, bays, and waters, has accomplished these goals. By encouraging the participation of States, local communities, industry, and the boating public, new generations of Americans have benefited from the development of comprehensive boating safety programs.

Two years after passage of the Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971, 1,754 recreational boating fatalities were reported, on a base of approximately 6 million recreational vessels registered. Since then, the number of registered boats has grown by over 100 percent, yet reported boating fatalities have declined to approximately 750–800 each year.

The coordinated efforts over the past 29 years of the Federal Government, including the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxiliary, States and local communities, and numerous recreational boating organizations, have made the Recreational Boating Safety Program a success. Cumulatively, an estimated 27,000 lives are estimated to have been saved as a result of the recreational boating safety programs established by the Federal Boat Safety Act.

However, despite these programs' successes, too many boaters still die on our Nation's waters. Recreational boating remains second only to highways in transportation-related fatalities. Some boaters lack basic boating safety knowledge and fail to adequately prepare or exercise caution when boating. Though recent accident statistics show improvement in many categories, nearly 70 percent of all recreational boating victims die by drowning. Nearly 90 percent of these

drowning victims were not wearing a life jacket. Most of those lives could have been saved if the victims had simply worn their life jackets.

This year's North American Safe Boating Campaign, highlighted during National Safe Boating Week, will emphasize the theme of "Boat Smart from the Start! Wear Your Life Jacket!" Many recreational boating organizations promote safety through educational programs, and I encourage those who will be on our waterways to take advantage of these lessons. I also urge all Americans who enjoy boating to wear their life jackets and otherwise to conduct themselves responsibly and safely.

In recognition of the importance of safe boating practices, the Congress, by joint resolution approved June 4, 1958 (36 U.S.C. 131), as amended, has authorized and requested the President to proclaim annually the 7-day period prior to Memorial Day weekend as "National Safe Boating Week."

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 19 through May 25, 2001, as National Safe Boating Week. I encourage the Governors of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the officials of other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, to join in observing this occasion and to urge Americans to practice safe boating habits throughout the year.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 21, 2001]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 18, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on May 22.

Remarks Greeting Crewmembers of the United States Navy Surveillance Aircraft Downed in China and an Exchange With Reporters

May 18, 2001

The President. Welcome to the Oval Office. The Vice President and I are thrilled to be able to look you in the eye and say, thanks for your service to the country. I remember in my phone call saying, “Gosh, I hope I can welcome you to the Oval Office,” and here you are.

You handled yourselves with such class and dignity, it was important for our Nation to realize the fine caliber of people that serve our country. And we’re really proud of you. We appreciate your mission, but most of all, we appreciate your character. And so it’s my honor to welcome you here. I look forward to giving you a tour around this majestic office, a shrine to the greatness of America.

I want to say one other thing before we visit informally. Today the violence in the Middle East took on a new level of intensity. Our country is deeply concerned, first and foremost, for those who lost their life and for the families affected. It is essential that the leaders in the Middle East speak out clearly against violence.

We must break the cycle of violence in order to begin meaningful discussions about any kind of political settlement. My administration will continue to work with the parties involved, reminding folks that violence will not lead to peace, obviously. Violence will make it so difficult for there to be any political settlement.

I’m concerned any time anybody loses life. I’m especially concerned about suicide bombers that have disregard for themselves and, obviously, for innocent folks. We will continue to work hard to bring peace to that important part of the region.

Thank you all for coming.

EP-3 Surveillance Aircraft in China

Q. What is the latest on the spy plane?

The President. We’re working to get the plane home. We’re making progress about getting the plane home. But today we get to celebrate the fact that the crew is home. And that’s the most important thing.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:40 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the Safe Harbor Water Power Corporation in Conestoga, Pennsylvania

May 18, 2001

Thank you very much. Please be seated. Well, Governor, thank you very much. It’s an honor to be back in your beautiful State. I’m glad you told me you were overseas recently; I thought you might have been boycotting my last visit to your State—[laughter]—which was Monday. [Laughter]

Laura and I consider Tom and Michelle close, personal friends, as well as political allies. And I know the people of Pennsylvania consider him to be an excellent Governor, because he is one.

I want to thank you all for coming. And I also want to thank the hundreds of citizens that lined the road as we came in, to wave. It makes a fellow feel pretty good to see all the flags and the salutes. This is a wonderful place to come, not only because it speaks volumes about the policy that I’m going to address today, but it also reminds me of how wonderful our country is, how good and solid the people are that inhabit the great land called America. So if you see any of them that were on the road coming in, tell them the President says, thanks a lot for the hospitality.

I’m also honored to be traveling today with Members of the United States Congress. The United States Senator—I was going to say, the senior Senator, but I’m looking for some votes from him—[laughter]—but that’s Arlen Specter, who is doing a great job for the people of Pennsylvania; and the younger Senator, Senator Rick Santorum, as well; as well, a friend of mine from the great State of Alaska is with us, chairman of the Energy Committee, Frank Murkowski. I think old Frank must be looking for a cup of coffee somewhere. [Laughter]

We also have the Congressman from this area, Congressman Todd Platts. Where are you, Todd? There you go, thank you, buddy.